

MTB World Cup XC #7 & DH #5 - CDM

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August 2: Elite men downhill

Hill powers to win

By Sue George in Bromont, Québec – cyclingnews.com

After setting the top qualifying mark, Sam Hill (Monster Energy) was again the fastest man down the hill during the finals on his way to the World Cup win. As the last man to ride in the finals, he descended 2.7 seconds faster to boot second placed Greg Minnaar (Santa Cruz Syndicate) from the hot seat. Minnaar's team-mate Steve Peat finished third after losing some time on the top part of the course where it was important to carry momentum.

"It's been a bit of a dry spell since Maribor," said Hill. "Since winning there, I've been concentrating on trying to keep my points lead and instead of trying to focus on winning and I feel like that's kind of why I haven't been riding as good. So after last weekend, I came in with the mindset that I just gotta go there and win."

World Champion Gee Atherton (Animal Commencal) put in a ride that he said was too conservative, but it was still good enough for fourth, and in his best performance of the season, Marc Beaumont (Team Bike Radar) finished fifth.



Sam Hill (Monster Energy) won
Photo ©: FJ Hughes

The men raced in front of an excited and large crowd - spread throughout the 1,500m track.

Remi Thirion (Team Sunn) clocked the first time to stick for awhile at 2:55.82. Several riders came close to him, but no one could oust him from the hot seat until French compatriot Damien Spagnolo, who finished in 2:54.68.

More than a half dozen racers later, the privilege of occupying the hot seat was being passed around like a hot potato. First up was Chris Kovarik in 2:54.64. Luke Strobel followed immediately in 2:54.56.

"It was really rough out there, but it was fun. I tried to keep it as smooth as I could," said Strobel who finished as the top American and was pleased to beat Kovarik. "I like taking Kovarik out," he played up a friendly rivalry. "He's one of my favourite riders, but usually he smokes me."

Next up with the then-best time was Mitchell Delfs with a 2:54.17.

"I made a few mistakes - nearly came off and went over the bars in one turn. I kept it together and my tires were hooking up super nice. It was a good run," said Delfs who more than met his goal of a top 20 finish by ending up in ninth.

Brendan Fairclough (Monster Energy) knocked several seconds off Delfs' time with a 2:51.65. "My run was the best I've done so far this year," said Fairclough.

Fairclough's time seemed promising and held up as favorites Sam Blenkinsop (Yeti Fox Shox), Fabien Pedemanaud (Team Pyrenees Morewood), Josh Bryceland (Santa Cruz Syndicate), Nathan Rennie (Santa Cruz Syndicate), Justin Leov (Yeti Fox Shox) and Matti Lehtikainen (MS-Intense Factory-Racing) completed their runs. The Finnish Lehtikainen rode with a noticeably aggressive style at clocked a time that was second best at the time.

"The track was a lot more slippery than I expected, so I was trying to push harder," said Lehtikainen, who is coming back from a broken back eight weeks ago and an injured knee five to six weeks ago, which caused him to miss the World Championships. "I didn't think it had rained that much and I was trying to ride hard, but I paid for it. I just kind of slid and skid everywhere."

"I'm getting better," he said of his recovery. "I've been pretty hard on myself - not being satisfied with my results, but I guess I have to accept that I'm a bit off the back at the moment, but I'm building my way back up again. I'm hopefully back on the podium by Canberra."

Beaumont sent a signal to the world that he, too, is back after injury by taking a turn in the hot seat. He clocked a 2:53.03.

"I put a good run together so I'm pretty stoked. It was my first top 10 of the year - I've been injured since the start of the season when I separated my shoulder," said Beaumont. "It's been all weak and I've been trying to get my way back up with the boys because everyone is going so fast."

Last weekend's winner Minnaar replaced him in the hot seat with a 2:44.84 and only time would tell if Minnaar's race was good enough for another win.

Gee Atherton couldn't beat him and neither could team-mate Steve Peat. Fabien Barel (Subaru Pro MTB team), who qualified in third, looked like he had a shot, but a flat tire high up on the course cost him all chances of a medal.

"It was shocking up top - pretty good down at the bottom," said Peat, who explained his race. "I lost all my time up at the top, in the flat woods - I stalled in a couple of turns where I needed to carry more speed. It was really early on and so I was trying to make up for it and get going. Then I made another little stall at the bottom of the technical rocks. You know you've made little mistakes and you know you have to try to rectify them and sometimes it can work in your favour and sometimes not."

Only Hill would beat Minnaar. He finished with a 2:42.14.

"I'm glad I rode the way I did in the final. I'm obviously a little disappointed in second, but I'm still really stoked," Minnaar said.

Hill said he improved from the semi-final to the final on the middle section of the course. "I figured out a couple of good lines in my last practice session today. So I'd only done them once before qualifying in practice and then that was another go through in qualifying and then this was the third time. The third time was lucky."

The technical and slippery terrain may have played a role in the crashes of several of the elite men. Nathan Rankin (Playbiker - Iron Horse), Nick Beer (Ixs Sports Division Racing), and Ryan Condrashoff were among those who went down.

"I crashed and then I tried to make up for it and that's always a mistake," said Condrashoff, who qualified as the second fastest American. When comparing the course to typical American downhill courses, he called Bromont exciting due to the jumps and spectators.

Results

1 Samuel Hill (Aus) Monster Energy	2.42.14
2 Greg Minnaar (RSA) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.02.70
3 Steve Peat (GBr) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.03.86
4 Gee Atherton (GBr) Animal Commencal	0.05.95
5 Marc Beaumont (GBr) Team Bike Radar	0.07.46
6 Brendan Fairclough (GBr) Monster Energy	0.09.51
7 Samuel Blenkinsop (NZl) Yeti Fox Shox Factory	0.10.72
8 Matti Lehtikainen (Fin) MS-Intense Factory-Racing	0.10.89
9 Mitchell Delfs (Aus) Kenda Tomac	0.12.01
10 Luke Strobels (USA) Team Maxxis	0.12.42
11 Chris Kovarik (Aus) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.12.50
12 Damien Spagnol (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro	0.12.54
13 Justin Leov (NZl) Yeti Fox Shox Factory	0.13.32
14 Andrew Neethling (RSA) GT Bicycles	0.13.48
15 Jared Rando (Aus) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.13.58
16 Remi Thirion (Fra) Team Sunn	0.13.68
17 Amiel Cavalier (Aus) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.13.90
18 Cameron Cole (NZl) Team Maxxis	0.14.03
19 Nathan Rennie (Aus) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.14.26
20 Josh Bryceland (GBr) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.14.77
21 Pasqual Canals Flix (Spa) Massi	
22 Thibaut Ruffin (Fra)	0.15.69
23 Nico Vink (Bel) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike	0.15.86
24 Julien Camellini (Fra) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.16.75
25 Pierre Charles Georges (Fra)	0.17.03
26 Ben Reid (Irl)	0.17.26
27 Oscar Saiz Castane (Spa) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.17.52
28 Florent Payet (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro	0.17.79
29 Sam Dale (GBr) Cannondale Factory Racing	0.18.21
30 Alan Begg (Ita)	0.18.48
31 Joseph Smith (GBr) Tomac Factory Racing	0.18.58
32 Maxime Remy (Fra) Team Sunn	0.18.83
33 Kieran Bennett (NZl)	0.19.24
34 Filip Polc (Svk) Kenda Tomac	0.19.49
35 Aaron Holmes Gwin (USA) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Rac	
36 Steve Smith (Can)	0.19.56
37 Adam Brayton (GBr) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.20.03
38 Boris Tetzlaff (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.20.19
39 Ruairidh Cunningham (GBr) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.20.42
40 Hans Lambert (Can) Norco World Team	0.20.77
41 Valentin Juillard (Fra) Team Sunn	0.20.89
42 Kyle Strait (USA) Specialized Factory Racin	0.21.07
43 Dean Tennant (Can)	0.21.40
44 Charles-Alexandre Dube (Can)	0.21.81
45 Danny Hart (GBr) Lapierre DH Powered By Sa	0.22.36
46 Thomas Braithwaite (GBr)	0.22.59
47 Will Rischbieth (Aus)	0.22.81
48 Toni Berg (Fin)	0.22.98
49 Ralph Jones (GBr)	0.23.01
50 Markolf Berchtold (Bra)	0.23.04
51 Matej Charvat (Cze)	0.23.27
52 Duncan Riffle (USA) Cannondale Factory Racing	0.23.46
53 Marcelo Gutierrez (Col)	0.23.72
54 Chris Hutchens (GBr) Mojo Orange	0.23.79
55 Mathieu Troquier (Fra) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.24.08
56 Alastair Wilson (GBr)	0.24.37
57 Eli Krahnenbuhl (USA)	0.24.46
58 Lorenzo Suding (Ita) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.24.51
59 Ludovic May (Swi)	0.24.69
60 Daniel Critchlow (GBr) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.25.05
61 Dylan Morley (Can) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.26.78
62 Jason Memmelars (USA)	0.26.87
63 Cody Warren (USA)	0.27.58
64 Drew Pautler (Can)	0.27.71
65 Samuel Zbinden (Swi) Argentina Bike Gravity Te	0.28.77

66 Neil Donoghue (GBr) Team Bike Radar	0.31.56
67 Erik Irmisch (Ger)	0.32.32
68 Nathan Rankin (NZl) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.36.13
69 Georg Sieder (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.36.40
70 Fabien Pedemanaud (Fra) Team Pyrenees Morewood	0.37.00
71 Nick Beer (Swi) Ixs Sports Division Racing	0.37.41
72 Dominik Gspan (Swi)	0.40.91
73 Ryan Condrashoff (USA)	0.42.72
74 Emyr Davies (GBr) Reverse Components	0.51.19
75 Matthew Simmonds (GBr) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.57.44
76 Mathieu Laurin (Can)	1.14.20
77 Michael Skinner (NZl) Playbiker - Iron Horse	1.36.48
78 Fabien Barel (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro	1.40.33
79 Jonty Neethling (RSA)	1.59.81
80 Dan Atherton (GBr)	3.37.42

Teams

1 Santa Cruz Syndicate	90 pts
2 Animal Commencal	70
3 Team Maxxis	69
4 Monster Energy / Iron Horse	66
5 MS-Intense Factory-Racing	47
6 Playbiker - Iron Horse	46
7 Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team	42
8 Giant Mountain Bike Team	34
9 Kona	32
10 Suspension Center	30
11 Team Bike Radar	28
12 Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense	27
13 4 Elements Yeti/Hotec/RSP	23
14 Subaru Mountain Bike Pro Team	22
15 Kenda Tomac	22
16 Norco World Team	19
17 GT Bicycles	17
18 Team Sunn	15
19 Massi	11
20 Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	8
21 Cannondale Factory Racing	2